

Public Services completes parkway, sidewalk and trail projects

Public Services recently completed the installation of new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant wheelchair ramps at the intersection of Carnegie Avenue and Swarthmore Lane.

This was part of the city's ongoing effort to enhance citywide accessibility and meet ADA requirements. In addition to installing wheelchair ramps, the project also included reconstruction of the cross-gutter and splash pad to improve drainage at this location.



Public Services also recently completed the reconstruction of the parkway drain at Wellesley Lane near Fairview Road (see before and after photos). The project entailed demolition of the deteriorated parkway culvert and reconstruction of a parkway drain to meet the city's standards. In addition to improving drainage conditions in the cul-de-sac, the project also included minor improvements to deteriorated sidewalk to eliminate displacements.

Improvements to the Harbor Boulevard Cornerstone Bicycle Trail at Fairview Development Center was also completed recently.

The improvements included the Fairview Developmental Center planter reconfiguration that reduced the planter size and the installation of concrete in its place to ultimately provide a larger turning radius for bicyclists.

First pet adoption through the city's new animal care system is a success

The city's move to the new Newport Center Animal Hospital for shelter services has so far yielded favorable results and improved customer service.

As part of this new operation, the city has also partnered with Priceless Pet Rescue to handle pet adoptions because Newport Center Animal Hospital is currently not set up to do adoptions.

City staff facilitated the first pet adoption out of the shelter through the no-kill Priceless Pet Rescue. Jack the schnauzer mix was adopted by Danielle Rudd, pictured above on the right.

"Already Jack is fitting in perfectly and is loving going to the park for walks and getting tons of cuddles," Rudd said. "Words cannot express how thankful I am to welcome Jack in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for working tirelessly to ensure she was placed in an awesome home with me and my mom."

Residents interested in adopting pets can visit [this page](#) for

more information

Gisler Park playground gets freshened up

Public Services Maintenance staff recently began its annual winter renovations that include citywide preventative and routine maintenance at city parks. The Gisler Park playground was the first of this season to receive a fresh layer of playground chips.



Thirty-five yards of this material were spread throughout the playground by Brightview (formerly Marina Landscape), the city's landscape maintenance contractor.

The additional playground chips provided an overall aesthetic and safety improvement to the park.

Recreation Coordinator Kevin Stoddart receives City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Recreation Coordinator Kevin Stoddart with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet employee recognition event on Thursday Jan. 25.

“As someone who has managed recreation and community services in the past, I know how important Kevin’s work is in regards to teaching kids about water safety and preventing drownings,” Hatch said. “I know I appreciate him, but even more I know his colleagues appreciate him as a hard worker who does the best job for the public we serve.”

Stoddart is a seven-year employee who began with the city as a part-time lifeguard and eventually was promoted to a full-time Recreation Coordinator.

In his role, he ensures the city remains compliant with all local, state, and federal laws governing water safety, and his staff is well-equipped to provide this same level of care during the busy summer months when Aquatics is the busiest.

He works to make sure his staff is trained properly, and his work ethic extends beyond that of his job description.

In January 2017, Stoddart was assigned the teen program, and he saw this as an opportunity to develop his staff and use his critical thinking skills to think of new ways to increase program attendance. And he was successful – in fact, so successful that the program reached new high records in attendance.

While his leadership is evident to both his supervisors and his peers, the same can be said in his interactions with the

general public. His level of customer service is bar none, and again, his critical thinking enables him to provide customers with more than a “no” or a “maybe” – he always looks for ways to accommodate the public to the best of his ability and ensure their experience with the Parks & Community Service is a memorable one.

He is a great contributor to the team and always looks and is willing to share creative ideas to take the department to the next level.

In addition to honoring Stoddart, City Manager Hatch welcomed several new employees and congratulated one on a promotion.

The new employees include, Antonette Penalba, an intern working with the Network for Homeless Solutions, Stacy Daugherty, the city’s new Finance Director, Jonathan Cruz, a Recreation Leader II and Cassandra Gamboa and Yassmin Perez, both Recreation Leader III.

Police Aide Miguel Villana was also recognized as well as Mikaela Soriano and Don Vu, two new interns in Public Services. Finally, City Manager Hatch congratulated Arash Rahimian for his promotion to senior engineer.

The Burrowing Owl and the Snowy Egret, an interesting juxtaposition of FVP

wildlife!

The Burrowing Owl and the Snowy Egret, an interesting juxtaposition of FVP wildlife!



Official State Grass of CA, Purple Needle Grass (*Nassella pulchra*) returns to FVP.

Native grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems in the US.



Website



Nesting White-tailed Kites & American Bittern

Nesting white-tailed kites observed from bluffs of Fairview Park, over-looking Talbert Regional Park, December 2017. – Courtesy of Lam-Son Vinh



Also The American Bittern in grasslands of Fairview Park, January 2018. – Courtesy of Lam-Son Vinh.

Western Toad

After just a little bit of rain on the week of December 18th, the common Western Toad – *Anaxyrus boreas*, hit the trails at Fairview Park.

Burrowing Owls

THEIR BACK! Sightings of Burrowing Owls have been on the rise at Fairview Park this season. They are not nesting, just visiting the park. Did you know that Fairview Park is said to have the greatest bird diversity of all parks in Orange County? Come out to view and photograph, you won't be disappointed!

Public Services keeps alley refurbishing rolling along

Public Services is halfway complete with the \$1.2 million citywide alley rehabilitation project. The city contracted with Black Rock Construction, who began the project in September 2017.

The project includes rehabilitation of 10 alleyways, which includes 145,000 square feet of new concrete improvements. The new pavement section replaces old asphalt with concrete containing fibrous, which are strength reinforcing additives designed to provide an extended service life under the stresses of passenger vehicles and trash trucks.



To date, the following alleyways are complete: 19th Street Alley located between 19th Street and Flower Street, from Orange Avenue to Westminster Avenue; Flower Street Alley located between Flower Street and Broadway, from Orange Avenue to Westminster Avenue. Several Broadway alleys were also completed including one located between Broadway and Magnolia Street, from Raymond Avenue to Tustin Avenue; another located between Broadway and Magnolia Street, from Westminster Avenue to Santa Ana Avenue; and another located between Broadway and Magnolia Street, from Orange Avenue to Westminster Avenue.

The following alleys are anticipated for completion by summer 2018: Flower Street Alley located between Flower Street and Broadway, from Westminster Avenue to Santa Ana Avenue; Mace Avenue Alley located between Mace Avenue and Ginger Avenue, from Caraway Drive to Wintergreen Place; another Flower Street Alley located between Flower Street and Broadway, from Orange Avenue to Fullerton Avenue; Sterling Avenue Alley located between Pomona Avenue and Wallace Avenue, from Sterling Avenue to W 20th Street; and another Sterling Avenue Alley located between Pomona Avenue and Wallace Avenue, from W 20th Street to W 19th Street.

City legal action forces Morningside Recovery to shut down three sober living homes

In response to a civil nuisance abatement legal action filed only 21 days ago on Jan. 2 by the City of Costa Mesa, Morningside Recovery LLC has agreed to shut down its remaining three sober living homes in the city, all of which were in violation of the city's sober living home ordinances, and to pay the city \$20,000 in legal fees and enforcement costs.

"This is a great outcome for the residents of Costa Mesa," said Mayor Pro Tem Allan Mansoor. "We are happy that the group home operator decided to work with us and settle this without significant court costs for either party. Hopefully, this sends a message to others that we will strictly enforce our city ordinances and ensure that our neighborhoods maintain a balance that is good for all residents."

The city had taken the abatement action against Morningside, several related entities and the owner of the properties, Barry Saywitz, LP, for failure to apply for and obtain conditional use permits and otherwise comply with in the city's sober living home ordinances. The city had initially taken code enforcement action against six Morningside's facilities within the city. While three ultimately closed, the properties on Orange Avenue, Peppertree Lane and Pomona Avenue remained in operation.

As a result this settlement, the facilities on Peppertree Lane and Pomona Avenue are required to close immediately, while the one on Orange Avenue is required to close on or before Aug.

31, 2018.

In addition, Morningside agreed that in connection with the closure of its sober living facilities, it will not “curb” residents onto the city streets and will otherwise comply with the provisions of the city’s ordinances relating to eviction of residents.

Police Department staff increases bring needed additions to several specialty assignments

The first deployment shift change for 2018 for the Costa Mesa Police Department has taken place, resulting in some exciting and new additions to several key specialty assignments.

The Traffic Safety Bureau gained a second traffic sergeant position to fill a long-time vacancy. This sergeant position will functionally oversee the department’s traffic officers, part-time traffic aides, and the traffic investigator position. With the breadth and volume of traffic-related issues throughout Costa Mesa, this additional sergeant will provide considerable expertise and oversight to a unit that continues to see growth.

The Police Department also saw expansion of the Community Policing Unit with the addition of a third officer. The Community Policing Unit was relaunched in late 2016 with new priorities and responsibilities to include, first and foremost, concentration on homeless outreach and liaison with

the city's Homeless Outreach Team. They also tackle other community issues and provide support to Patrol Services and other units throughout the department. For the first time, the Community Policing Unit will now have officers in the field seven days a week.

The Gang Investigations Unit also experienced milestone growth with the return of a gang sergeant and addition of two gang investigators, for a total of four. Enhanced staffing will allow the Gang Investigation Unit to return to an independently operating unit under the Investigative Services Bureau. Much like the Community Policing Unit, the Gang Investigative Unit has expanded its presence and impact throughout the week.

Costa Mesa contracts with Newport Center Animal Hospital for shelter services

The City of Costa Mesa has entered into an agreement with the Newport Center Animal Hospital and Pet Hotel Suites in Newport Beach to provide animal shelter services and veterinary care.

This agreement is on a temporary basis until a permanent solution to the city's animal care needs can be analyzed and a long-term decision made by the City Council.

The Newport Center Animal Hospital is owned by Dr. Anthony M. Rizk, who has direct experience in shelter medicine and disease control.

"We believe the Newport Center Animal Hospital will offer

high-quality care for the dogs, cats and other animals that are lost or abandoned in the City of Costa Mesa,” City Manager Tom Hatch said. “Because Dr. Rizk is experienced in shelter medicine, we think this is an ideal short-term solution for us and for our residents who care deeply about their pets.”

Under the new agreement, a veterinarian will be on site six days a week and on call on Sundays. The city will pay the hospital \$20,833 per month for the shelter services.

“My interest is to provide the best care for the animals that come to my hospital,” said Dr. Rizk. “I am looking forward to working with the city of Costa Mesa and the community to assist these animals. I’m excited to be back to where I started in shelter medicine and to fully utilize my shelter care skill sets.”

The City of Costa Mesa’s newly formed Animal Services Committee will be tasked with researching shelter options and proposing a long-term solution to the City Council over the coming months. The committee was appointed at the Tuesday Jan. 16 Council meeting and consists of seven members and two alternates.

“The City Council formed our new committee because our pets deserve the best care possible, and I look forward to working with committee members to ensure that will happen,” Mayor Sandy Genis said.

The multi-level Newport Center Animal Hospital is fully indoors and climate controlled with animals afforded larger spaces with unique amenities, including cat condos equipped with perches. For dogs, there are play areas as well as calming videos and music.



Most of the suites are plexi-glass enclosures designed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and decrease potential injuries to animals.

The hospital is staffed with 20 full-time employees, 10 of whom are caretakers. The employees walk dogs on a daily basis and assist with visual exams and other veterinary care needs. Other services that will be provided at the shelter are:

- Initial entry exams
- Pre-adoption exams
- Pre-adoption spay and neuter
- Vaccinations
- Microchip placement and enrollment
- Free follow-up post-adoption exams
- Veterinary care until adoption
- Daily visual exams

The hospital is also equipped with an in-house laboratory, in-house pharmacy, digital imaging and radiography, ultrasound and digital dental radiographs. The facility features a state-of-the-art surgical suite and offers laser surgery and

therapy.

Under the new agreement, any remaining animals at the Humane Society's Huntington Beach facility will be examined by a doctor of veterinary medicine upon transfer on Sunday Jan. 21 to the new Newport Center facility and will be under the care of Dr. Rizk.

For the short term, the Newport Center facility will not offer adoption services. City staff is currently negotiating with local rescue groups and third party non profits to provide those adoption services until a long-term solution is found.

Dr. Rizk has committed to employing the best practices in veterinary care and in emergency medicine and surgery. He has worked for and volunteered his time and surgical skills across Humane Societies, shelters, and rescues in Los Angeles and Orange County.

In addition, he is well versed in exotic pet medicine and the hospital serves pigs, birds and rabbits with medicine. There is dentistry and oral surgery, as well as soft tissue and orthopedic surgery available.

Dr. Rizk is a member of American Veterinary Medical Association and the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association and is a graduate of the University of Illinois veterinary school. He completed his undergraduate work at UCLA and worked on university research studies focusing on animal behavior and neurology as an instructor and teaching graduate student.

The Newport Center Animal Hospital was established in 1972 and was purchased by Dr. Rizk in 2016. It is located at 1333 Avocado Ave, Newport Beach. [Click here to visit the website.](#)

Dr. Rizk is planning to offer interested community members a tour of the facility in upcoming weeks.

Residents who find missing or injured animals or who believe their animal is lost should continue to call the city's Animal Control dispatch at (714) 754- 5674. For general questions regarding animal control or to report wildlife related issues please call the Animal Control hotline at (714) 754-5311.